



News Release

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CH2MHill Awarded Contract for Delta Plan

*Comprehensive Plan will guide state and local actions in the Delta;
Council to hire independent contractor to review Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)*

Sacramento – The Delta Stewardship Council announced today (April 30) that it has selected a team headed by CH2MHill to assist in the development of the comprehensive long-term management plan for California’s Delta required in legislation passed last November.

“All four firms who submitted qualifications were outstanding, but the team put together by CH2MHill stood out,” said Council Chair Phil Isenberg. The Council considered the four proposals at its April 22 meeting and voted unanimously to move forward with CH2MHill. Department of Water Resources (DWR) rules prohibited release of the name of the winning bidder until the contract was signed.

CH2MHill was selected following a review of qualifications (RFQ) process jointly conducted by DWR and the Delta Stewardship Council over the past two months. The Council used the DWR contracting process because of the tight timeframe for creating the Delta Plan. The Council did not come into existence until Feb. 3; the Delta plan must be adopted by Jan. 1, 2012.

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"Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."

– State Water Code §85054

Administration of the contract will be transferred from DWR to the Council, which will direct development of the Plan. “Using the existing DWR process saved us from a six- to nine-month delay getting started – time better used developing the Delta Plan in an open and transparent process so that we can meet our legislative deadline,” Isenberg said.

State law calls for the Delta Plan to guide state and local actions in the Delta so that they further the coequal goals. According to the California Water Code, Section 85054: "Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place.”

Under the direction of the Council and its staff, the CH2MHill team will assist in developing a Plan that is required to promote a healthy Delta ecosystem, promote a more reliable water supply, make recommendations regarding state agency management of lands in the Delta, promote statewide water conservation, water use efficiency, and sustainable use of water, promote options for new and improved infrastructure relating to the water conveyance in the Delta, storage systems, and to reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta by promoting effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and strategic levee investments.

Independent review of the BDCP process

New state law requires the Council to consult with the state and federal agencies conducting an environmental review of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and to incorporate the BDCP into the Delta Plan if it meets certain environmental requirements. Those requirements include a determination by the California Department of Fish and Game that the BDCP qualifies as a

Natural Community Conservation Plan. “The Department of Fish and Game’s determination that the BDCP has met the requirements of this section may be appealed to the council”, Section 85320 (e).

To assist in the BDCP environmental review and possible appeal, the Council agreed at its April 22 meeting to hire an independent consultant that has not previously been involved in the BDCP. All of the bidders had some association with the BDCP process. CH2MHill has been helping to develop the environmental review of the BDCP currently under way through the Department of Water Resources.

The Council expects to develop an interim Delta Plan in the near future and a draft Delta Plan by late fall. Scoping and an environmental review process would occur during 2011. The \$9.5 million contract will be paid through Prop. 84 funds and runs through 2012.

More information about the Council, the Delta Plan, and the RFQ submittals is at www.deltacouncil.ca.gov.

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